SIAST
SASKATCHEWAN INSTITUTE OF
APPLIED SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) Report for 2000-2001

Prepared by:
SIAST Planning, Research and Development Division
Institutional Research Office

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Executive Summary

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is a process of recognizing and giving credit for skills, knowledge and competence that have been acquired experientially through *work experience, non-credit courses, industry training, self-study* and *volunteer activities.*

In the academic year 2000-2001, PLAR activity continued to increase. Three hundred and fifty-seven (357) applicants requested prior learning assessment and recognition for 965 courses offered at SIAST.

The percentages throughout are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Applicants

192 (54%) of the 357 applicants for PLAR were associated with one of the six program divisions:

- 35 (10%) were from the Business and Agriculture Division
- 20 (6%) from the Community Services Division
- 2 (<1%) from the Industrial Training Division
- 37 (10%) from the Nursing Division
- 83 (23%) from the Science and Health Division
- 15 (4%) from the Technology Division

Divisional Course Requests

394 (41%) of the 965 course requests for PLAR, were from one of the six program divisions:

- 65 (7%) - Business and Agriculture Division
- 36 (4%) - Community Services Division
- 2 (<1%) - Industrial Training Division
- 38 (4%) - Nursing Division
- 228 (24%) - Science and Health Division
- 25 (2%) - Technology Division

Extension Activity

165 (46%) of the 357 applicants for PLAR were extension activity
571 (59%) of the 965 course requests were extension activity

Course Requests

The results of the 965 course requests indicate that:

- 790 (82%) were successful
- 13 (1%) were unsuccessful
- 21 (2%) were partial
- 141 (15%) were still pending at June 30, 2001

Comparison with PLAR in 1999-2000

	1999-2000	2000-2001	Increase
Applicants	224	357	+59%
Course Requests	559	965	+73%
Successful Course Requests	402	790	+97%
Extension Activity	397	571	+44%

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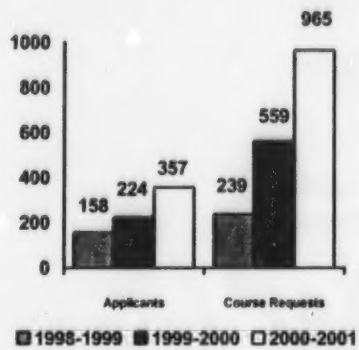
1.0 Report of the PLAR Activity at SIAST in 2000-2001

1.1 Report of the SIAST-wide PLAR Activity in 2000-2001

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is a process of recognizing and giving credit for skills, knowledge and competence that have been acquired experientially through *work experience, non-credit courses, industry training, self-study* and *volunteer activities.*

PLAR activities at SIAST increased significantly in the 2000-2001 academic year. Figure 1 identifies that in this year, 357 applicants requested prior learning assessment and recognition for 965 courses offered at SIAST. Therefore, a number of the 357 applicants requested PLAR for more than one course, an average of 3 courses to one request. Both the applications and course requests in 2000-2001 for PLAR increased by 59% and 73% respectively over the 1999-2000 academic year. Requests for PLAR have increased each year since the process began at SIAST.

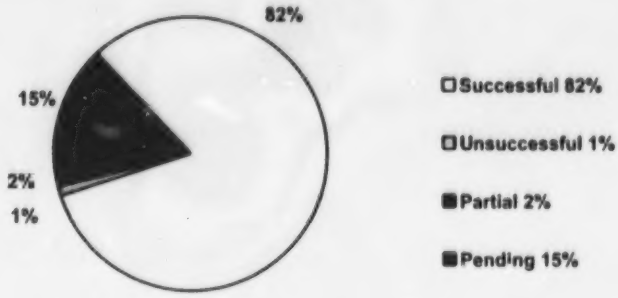
Figure 1: Course Requests and Applicants SIAST-wide



There are four possible results from the PLAR requests – *successful, partial, pending* and *unsuccessful.* Figure 2 records the status of the 965 course requests. The *successful* PLAR course requests in 2000-2001 increased by 10% from 1999-2000. The results of the PLAR requests were: 790 successful; 13 unsuccessful; and 21 partial. One hundred and forty one (15%) of the course requests in 2000-2001 had a *pending* status, which means that the process for review of the requests began in the 2000-2001 academic year and will be completed in the next academic year (2001-02).

SIAST has established August 1 as the reporting date for the release of the official student data from the previous academic year (July 1 to June 30). At that point-in-time, the PLAR requests that have not been finalized are given the status *pending.* Although the status may change, the *pending* results from the previous year (1999-2000) were not counted in the PLAR data for 2000-2001. The PLAR office is working with the registration department to develop procedural and reporting systems to address the data management issue and better capture the results of the *pending* requests between academic years.

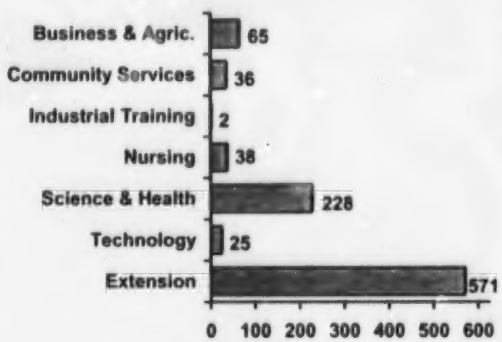
Figure 2: Status of 965 Course Requests - SIAST-wide



1.2 SIAST PLAR Requests, by Division and Extension Activities

The 965 course requests were organized into either the respective programs - and consequently divisions - or into extension activity (Figure 3). Course requests within the six program divisions in 2000-01 increased by 143% over the previous year (from 162 to 394). Extension activity within PLAR is defined as requests for assessment and recognition for specific courses from applicants not yet formally registered in programs at SIAST. The number of course requests within extension also increased in this academic year, by 44% (from 397 to 571).

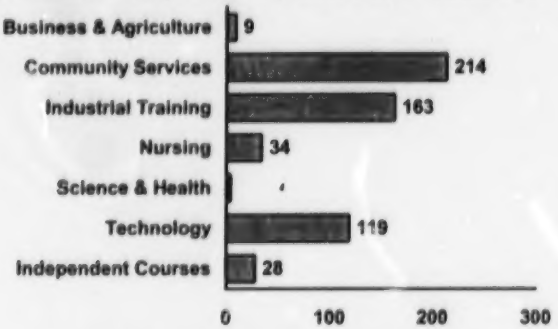
Figure 3: Course Requests by Division and Extension Activities – Total 965



The six program division figures totaled 394

Since the majority of courses at SIAST are associated within single programs, and consequently within single divisions, it was possible to organize the 2000-2001 data and place 543 of the 571 extension PLAR course requests within the appropriate programs, as indicated in Figure 5 below. There are always exceptions where courses cut across divisional boundaries, such as WHMIS, sanitation, word processing, and first aid. In 2000-2001, there were not any extension PLAR requests for these types of courses where it could not be determined in which programs or divisions they were associated. However, the remaining 28 of the 571 extension requests were for other courses not categorized or identified with specific programs at SIAST. In Figure 4, the 28 are referred to as *independent courses*.

Figure 4: Extension Course Requests, by Division – Total 571



The six program division extension figures totaled 543

Therefore, when the extension data, as shown in Figure 4, was combined with the program division data, as shown in Figure 3, the total number of course requests in each division was:

- Business & Agriculture – 74 (8%)
- Industrial Training – 165 (17%)
- Science & Health – 232 (24%)
- Independent Courses – 28 (3%)
- Community Services – 250 (26%)
- Nursing – 72 (7%)
- Technology – 144 (15%)

Total 965

1.3 PLAR Activity, by Program

In 2000-2001, SIAST offered 188 credit programs, exclusive of the apprenticeship programs. Twenty-two of the 188 programs had a total of 532 course requests. Therefore, 55% of all course requests in 2000-2001 related to 12% of the programs offered at SIAST. The balance of the course requests, 45%, was the registrations for assessment from applicants not yet formally registered in programs at SIAST. Requests in these instances were referred to as *division recognized courses.* Based on the PLAR data provided by BANNER, it was possible to select the appropriate division associated with these requests.

With the exception of the 28 *independent courses* within extension activity mentioned above in section 1.2, the remaining 543 of the 571 course requests within extension were totaled with the division data in Figure 3. Therefore, Tables 1–6 report the 937 PLAR course requests (965 less 28) organized by divisions and identified by programs.

Table 1: Business and Agriculture Division PLAR Course Requests

Programs	# of Course Requests
Business Year 1	2 (3%)
Computer Information Systems	1 (1%)
Office Education	40 (54%)
Division Recognized Courses	31 (42%)
Total	**74**

The 40 course requests in the Office Education program related mainly to individuals seeking assessment for practicums and work placements, as identified by the following courses:

- WORK 130 Model Office
- WORK 161 Model Office
- JOBS 143 Participate in Work Placements
- WORK 131 Work Placement
- WORK 162 Work Training
- COMM 162 Interpersonal Communications

Table 2: Community Services Division PLAR Course Requests

Programs	# of Course Requests
Ceramic Foundations	36 (14%)
Ceremics Sculpture	7 (3%)
Chemical Dependency Worker	3 (1%)
Ecotourism	5 (2%)
Library and Information Technology	3 (1%)
Managing a Craft Business	6 (2%)
Media Arts Production	7 (3%)
Professional Cooking	1 (<1%)
Provincial Corrections Worker	134 (55%)
Rehabilitation Worker	5 (2%)
Teacher Assistant	1 (<1%)
Division Recognized Courses	42 (17%)
Total	**250**

The large number of course requests for the Provincial Corrections Worker program (134) was the result of assessment of the following seven courses specific to the program.

- COMM 170P Communication Skills (Partial)
- CORR 151P Criminal Justice System (Partial)
- CORR 155P Community Based Justice (Partial)
- CORR 156) Demo Interpersonal Skills (Partial)
- CORR 149 Understand Diversity
- CORR 154 Examine Aboriginal Issues
- MGMT 145P Manage Offender Groups

Workers hired by the province's correctional centers bring with them valued transferable knowledge, skills and training gained from associated work experiences. The Provincial Correction program provides opportunities for such workers to have their previous learning assessed toward certification. This credit is also recognized within the diploma program for those who may wish to ladder.

Table 3: Industrial Training Division PLAR Course Requests

Programs	# of Course Requests
Automotive Service Technology	2 (1%)
Heavy Equipment Operator	163 (99%)
Total	**165**

The Heavy Equipment Operator program had 163 course requests, and represented 99% of requests from this division, with the following seven courses:

- WORK 147 Practicum
- HEOP 140 Construction Survey Spec.
- HEOP 143 Backhoe
- HEOP 145 Front End Loader
- SUPP 152 Heavy Equipment Operator
- HEOP 142 Practicum
- HEOP 144 Motor Grader

The delivery method of this program is work-based training through contracted services. PLAR was used to recognize previously learned on-the-job skills at the work site. Additional training components were delivered by SIAST to reach full HEO certification.

Table 4: Nursing Division PLAR Course Requests

Programs	# of Course Requests
Nursing Re-Entry	3 (4%)
Division Recognized Courses	69 (96%)
Total	**72**

The larger number of requests in the division recognized courses was for the PHAR 160 Drug Therapy course, which is offered in the Practical Nursing and Practical Nursing Re-Entry programs.

Table 5: Science and Health Division PLAR Course Requests

Programs	# of Course Requests
Dental Hygiene	19 (8%)
Home Care/Special Care Aide	2 (1%)
Division Recognized Courses	207 (91%)
Total	**232**

The high number of division recognized courses, 207, related mainly to the emergency health care programs and the following three courses:

- PHAR 267 Pre-hospital Medications
- EMFR 261 Patient Management Skills
- EMER 274 Ambulance Practicum

PLAR was a key service in assisting experienced emergency medical care workers to meet new provincial certification requirements.

Table 6: Technology Division PLAR Course Requests

Programs	# of Course Requests
Industrial Electronics Technology	1 (<1%)
Industrial Instrument Mechanic	19 (13%)
Process Operator	3 (2%)
Division Recognized Courses	121 (84%)
Total	**144**

The majority of the 121 division recognized courses related to the Water Resources Engineering Technician program. This recently approved program provides retraining, upgrading and continuing education opportunities for practitioners in industry in order for them to meet employment and provincial certification regulations. PLAR was requested for the following courses in the program:

- SFTY 125 - Safety
- ETHC 126 Environment Ethics & Society
- CADD 123 Introduction to AutoCAD
- ADMN 125 Organizational Skills
- DRFT 125 Introduction to Drafting
- SRVY 122 Basics of Surveying

Conclusion

The results in the report emphasize the increasing trend for prior learning assessment services, as clients seek SIAST training and credentials. The demand on program areas is growing as they respond with quality assessment methods to requests from both individuals and organizations. Because PLAR requests reflect the changing skills and qualifications of individual candidates, as well as the *extension* nature of the majority of requests, it is difficult to anticipate where and when PLAR will be required. To date, 540 distinct SIAST credit courses have been reviewed and credit given through prior learning assessment. Many of these may have been provided on a pilot basis and now require refinement or development of established tools for a consistent application. Programs will need continued support from SIAST in providing PLAR training, resources, materials and processes so that additional courses and programs can be prepared to meet this increasing demand for Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition.

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